



The President's Daily Brief

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DAILY BRIEF
18 FEBRUARY 1967

1. Vietnam

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Prime Minister Ky and Chief of State Thieu are eyeing each other like a pair of fighting cocks just before combat. This is the way one South Vietnamese politician describes the present relationship of the two leading presidential hopefuls in Saigon. The rivalry is, in fact, becoming increasingly open, though both men realize the dangers of a split in the military and will probably seek some kind of an accommodation before it is too late.

Meanwhile, we are again beginning to hear broad hints that Ky would like very much to visit the US this spring. Among other things, he thinks it will help him politically.

3. Soviet Union

The Laotian Government has, as expected, granted the Soviets overflight privileges for several round-trip flights between Moscow and Hanoi. The flights--which are to bypass China--will be by way of Pakistan, India, and Burma. We have not yet heard whether these three have agreed to the flights.

A single Soviet flight was made over the route at the height of the Sino-Soviet tension last week.

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4. Soviet Union

The Soviets are harassing the two US destroyers cruising in the Black Sea since Thursday. Aircraft--including supersonic bombers--have repeatedly overflown the ships, a Soviet tanker tried to force a collision yesterday, and today a Soviet destroyer is shadowing them. Both ships are due to exit the Bosporus tomorrow.

5. Soviet Union

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6. Ghana

Key members of the National Liberation Council--the guys with the guns who ousted Nkrumah--are so fed up with Chief of State General Ankrah that they may force his resignation later this month. Since they put Ankrah where he is, they probably can in fact remove him. His ouster would not immediately affect the regime's pro-Western orientation, but would have unsettling internal repercussions at a time when Ghana is making some progress toward getting back on its feet economically.

7. French Somaliland

It now looks as if the natives might sever ties with France by voting "no" in next month's referendum. This would put the place up for grabs between neighboring Somalia and Ethiopia.

The Somali Army is massing along the border, and would like to see the Somali half of the population take over if the French leave. Ethiopia says it cannot stand still for this, since the ocean terminus of the vital railroad from Addis Ababa would then be in "unfriendly" hands.

An eventual clash between the Soviet-equipped Somali Army and US-equipped Ethiopian forces cannot be ruled out.

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